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DE RUEHPF #1092/01 160112Z
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 091122Z JUN 06
FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6838
INFO RUEHBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 1578
RUEHHI/AMEMBASSY HANOI 3940
RUEHKL/AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR 0306
RUEHHM/AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH CITY 0042
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1477

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PHNOM PENH 001092

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
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DEPARTMENT FOR EAP/MLS, G/TIP AND EAP/RSP

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [CB](#) [KWMN](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR PRESSES CAMBODIAN DPM ON TIP

REF: A. SECSTATE 85578

[1](#)B. SECSTATE 89018

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: On June 8, the Ambassador delivered the Trafficking in Persons (TIP) demarche to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sar Kheng noting the upgrade from Tier 3 to Tier 2 Watch List. While praising Cambodia's progress during the previous year, he emphasized that law enforcement officials have not done an exemplary job in recent months. He also urged the speedy passage of the draft anti-TIP law. DPM Sar Kheng welcomed Cambodia's upgrade and pledged to redouble RGC efforts on TIP. The Ambassador also pressed for progress in fighting corruption, which hurt TIP and other efforts. End Summary.

TIP DEMARCHE

[1](#)2. (SBU) On June 8, the Ambassador delivered the Trafficking in Persons demarche to DPM Sar Kheng, and provided the text of the Cambodian report included in reftel. He encouraged Cambodia to pass pending anti-TIP legislation and to maintain Cambodia's positive momentum on anti-TIP efforts. The number of police investigations has declined in recent months, noted the Ambassador, who urged the MOI to increase its efforts. He lauded the work of an RGC delegation led by Minister of Women's Affairs Ing Kantha Phavi and Ministry of Interior and Justice officials who visited Washington for detailed consultations on TIP issues.

[1](#)3. (SBU) The DPM was pleased that Cambodia had been moved from Tier 3 to the Tier 2 Watch List. He noted that the new Tier ranking came with an interim assessment, which the DPM thought would ensure that Cambodia did not backtrack on its commitments. He promised to look into the anti-trafficking law and encourage its passage to show Cambodia's commitment to fighting TIP. Sar Kheng went on to state that he will look into concerns that law enforcement efforts have declined. The DPM said that the Tier upgrade will encourage Cambodia to maintain its focus on fighting human trafficking.

CORRUPTION IN CAMBODIA

[1](#)4. (SBU) The Ambassador went on to explain that Washington also wanted to see progress on corruption, which affected Cambodia's performance on TIP and other areas. He emphasized that it was important that an anti-corruption law be passed that met international standards. He added that passing such

a law would affect how the donor community as well as foreign investors look at Cambodia. The Ambassador noted that Cambodia has the opportunity to improve its performance on fighting corruption just as it had increased its anti-TIP efforts.

15. (SBU) The DPM agreed that the passage of the anti-corruption law was important but added that this is a sensitive issue. He talked about the need to decentralize power in Cambodia. He noted how well Cambodia's economy had been growing recently but only a few people were receiving the fruits of that growth; he saw decentralization as a cure to this uneven growth. Sar Kheng reflected that on a recent visit to Japan, he met a provincial governor and saw how a province of 800,000 people generated revenue of \$4 billion while the 14 million people in Cambodia generated less than \$1 billion in revenue. He thanked the USG for the assistance given for administrative reform and singled out for praise the \$3 million per year in funding from USAID for a local administration reform program.

16. (SBU) The Ambassador offered to send a copy of the suggested changes to the anti-corruption law put forward by the donor community to the DPM for consideration. Sar Kheng said he would review the suggestions and see how the MOI can be of assistance in the incorporation of the proposed changes to the draft bill.

COMMENT

17. (SBU) Sar Kheng did not appear to be surprised by the suggestion that the police have not been as diligent in anti-TIP investigations and arrests since earlier in the

PHNOM PENH 00001092 002 OF 002

year. We plan to see Police Commissioner Hok Lundy next week to convey our concerns and urge his office to actively pursue investigation requests from NGOs. The MOI, which has an interest in the anti-corruption legislation given the investigatory nature of the Anti-Corruption Body, is not in a strong position to affect changes to the draft law at this stage, although DPM Sar Kheng carries weight in ruling party deliberations.

STORELLA